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## RELIGIOUS VALUES

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A striking characteristic of contemporary philosophy is the attention given to theory of value. The subject has been given a new and more empirical turn by the work of Meinong and his followers. It is the purpose of the present essay to suggest a way of applying the results of such an empirical analysis and classification of values to the study of religion.

### I

First, a word as to the sense in which I shall speak of "values." Religion expresses, I take it, the most profound solicitude of which we are capable, tinged with that confidence or optimistic bias which must attend all life. Religion signifies the most good that we can expect or hope for from this world of ours. To lose one's religion is, then, to hear bad news—to reduce expectation and abandon hopes. It is not merely a matter of changing one's opinion, but of reconciling one's self to altered fortunes. A religious philosophy is a report upon the cosmic state of affairs with reference to man's investments—a stock-taking, an appraisal by which a man may know his inheritance and his prospects. Different philosophies will render different reports, and they may differ, not only as respects their correctness, but as respects the degree in which they

exceed or disappoint our expectations. *What philosophy makes the most favorable report?* It is evident that if any such comparative judgments are to be made, they must be made in terms of some constant standard of value. It is inevitable, then, that we should ask how man's fortunes are to be measured. What is the unit of value of which all good things are compounded, and in terms of which we may compute or estimate profit and loss?

It appears to me fairly clear that nothing is of value except in so far as it is wanted or liked, or comprises some wanting or liking; and that wanting and liking are of value only in so far as they reach or possess their objects. There is value, then, when there is *having of what one likes* or *getting of what one wants*. For the sake of abbreviation, it is convenient to use the term "interest" to mean any activity or disposition of liking or wanting, or of their opposites disliking and fearing, and the term "fulfilment" to mean the peculiar relation which an interest bears to its object. Having what one likes or dislikes, or the realization of one's desire or fear, would be instances of interests fulfilled. The fulfilment of interests of one class, such as liking or wanting, would then constitute goodness; while fulfilment of the opposite interests, such as dislike or repugnance, would constitute evil.

It will be useful to make several further distinctions. The fulfilment of an interest, including interest, object, and the peculiar relation between them, may be called an *intrinsic* value, in the sense that such value does not involve reference to anything beyond itself; whereas any means or condition of such fulfilment would be an *extrinsic* value. Of extrinsic values there are two important classes, immediate and instrumental. Immediate values are objects that fulfil interest directly, that is, objects in which interests terminate, things liked or wanted for themselves. Instrumental values are causes of immediate values, things owing their value to their efficacy in producing objects of interest.

One further distinction and we shall have completed our terminology. Among the extrinsic values, both immediate and instrumental, there is an important difference between the values of ideality and those of reality. One cannot employ terms of such equivocal import without carefully guarding them. By ideal in

this context I mean an imaginative representation of the object of interest. It is not necessary here to enter into the epistemological niceties of the question. I have elsewhere<sup>1</sup> recorded the opinion that the synthetic act of consciousness brings into existence complexes which otherwise would not exist at all. I have been impressed with the originality and caprice of the creative imagination, and I am inclined to regard it as genuinely creative. It is further characteristic of the imagination that it often prefigures the fulfilment of interests. I fancy, dream, suppose, and tend to believe what I like or loathe, desire or dread. Such an object, invoked by an interest and held in existence only by the act of imagination, I propose to term an ideal. By real value-objects, on the other hand, I mean objects which fulfil interest and exist independently of the interested subject's consciousness of them. This consciousness may have been instrumental in bringing about their existence, but now that they exist that consciousness may be withdrawn and they will nevertheless remain as parts of the world of organized fact. To avoid a possible misunderstanding, let me say that consciousness may be a part of such a real object. Thus, I may long to see God, and fancy that I do. My seeing God, *then*, exists only by virtue of my imagining that complex. When I *do* see God, however, though my consciousness is a part of the fact, that complex fact itself is independent of any ulterior consciousness. But it matters not into what epistemological terms one translates it, as long as one provides for such a distinction as that between imagining that one is in Rome and *being* in Rome.

The ideal object possesses values similar to those of the real object which it prefigures. He who longs to be in Rome enjoys imagining himself in Rome, and he who hates snakes shrinks from their image as from their actual presence. The values of ideality are real as values, since interest is fulfilled independently of consciousness of the fact; but bearing in mind that the term "ideal" signifies the status of the object, rather than of the value itself, we may for the sake of brevity call them ideal values, and we may call the values of reality real values. Ideal values, as well as real values, may be either immediate or instrumental. For the objects

<sup>1</sup> *The New Realism*, pp. 139-40.

of the imagination not only may interest me for themselves, but may serve as means to their own realization, or to the fulfilment of other interests. With these distinctions in mind, let us consider the values that may be in question in religion.

## II

In order to spend as little time as possible in preliminary definitions, I propose to state shortly what I conceive religion to be. I shall present the matter somewhat loosely in order to remain within the limits of familiar and generally accepted ideas. The constant feature of religion seems to me to be not any unique part of human nature but a specific aspect of the environment. There always has been and there always will be a difference between that part of the environment which man controls, and that part which controls him. Man proposes, but only to a limited extent does he dispose. And that which man does not control is always more potent as respects success and failure than that which he does control. This fact may be brought home to him in connection with any of his interests. The love of life, of friends, of wealth, of truth, of power—any of these may bring man to the sobering sense of dependence or failure. There is a cosmic drift of things, a something going on, a current of time and tide, in which a man emerges for a moment, in which he is swept along even while he exerts himself most desperately, and into which he seems again to disappear. That which, having been before him, is all about him and will continue after him—past, circumstance, and future, viewed as source, fortune, and destiny—this is the reality to which in religion man addresses himself. The necessity of religion lies in two incontestable and universal facts: first, the presence of this environing potency; second, the importance of taking account of it. The peculiar subjectivity of religion, the religious consciousness, with its vague “spiritual longings,” its faith and its ideas, is not the original fact, but the result of the experience of this *practical situation*.

With this view of religion in mind, let us make use of the distinctions introduced above. There may be said to be two sorts of religious objects, the real and the ideal; and the values of each

may be termed religious values. The real objects of religion are the ultimate cosmic forces themselves; and the ideal objects are all of the works of the cosmic imagination. Let us consider each of these in turn with a view to applying further distinctions.

1. *The real religious values.*—The ultimate environment of life may conceivably be one or many. In other words, human fortune and destiny may be a resultant of diverse forces operating independently, or it may be determined by a single force governed by a single law. Man may belong to one cosmic system, or he may belong to intersecting systems and be subject to several irreducible laws. Any ultimate ground or explanation, whether monistic or pluralistic, possesses the cosmic character which is peculiar to religion. Since the term "God" might seem a question-begging epithet, let us speak of such an ultimate ground as a cosmic reality.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing the type of value which such an object might possess, we are met at the outset by the difficulty of deciding whether we may properly limit our account to extrinsic value. A cosmic reality might certainly possess intrinsic value. This would mean, as we have seen, that it would consist of or contain the fulfilment of some interest. An Epicurean god, original, independent, and indifferent to man, is entirely conceivable. And such a being would undoubtedly possess value. But would it possess religious value? One thing is clear. Historically, at least, the Epicurean gods possessed religious value either in respect of their indifference to man as shattering his illusions or in respect of the satisfaction which they afforded his aesthetic or intellectual interests. In other words, their intrinsic value, or value in relation to their own interests, did not give them their religious status. The God of Christianity who pities his children, and without whom not a sparrow shall fall to the ground, may be said to realize his interests in the well-being of his creatures, and so to constitute an intrinsic value which is inclusive of man. But here again it seems to me evident that the religious aspect of the value lies in the relation to man. The religious value is the value to man of a haven

<sup>1</sup> I take it that the term "God" signifies an agency with whom man may enter into social relations. It is not clear whether this "personality" of God is always assigned to him "really," or whether it may be regarded as added by the religious imagination.

of refuge after the wanderings of sin, and not the joy in heaven over his repentance.

This view of the matter is consistent with our general notion of religion. For religion springs from man and not from God. The cosmic reality is its object, but not less truly is man its subject. The motive of religion is a human and not a cosmic need. The cosmic reality is a religious object in respect of its bearing on man, and its distinctively religious values must be determined in that reference. Whether the cosmic reality be regarded as external to man or as comprising and intending his good, in either case its religious value is to be defined in relation to man's interests so far as these are fulfilled by it. I shall therefore confine myself to the extrinsic values of religious objects, with the understanding that such values will consist in a tendency of such objects directly or indirectly to fulfil human interests. Extrinsic values may, as we have seen, be either immediate or instrumental. Let us consider each of these possibilities in turn.

(1) Immediate value attaches to an object that is capable of fulfilling interest of itself. Is there any human interest that terminates in cosmic reality? This is most certainly the case with the intellectual or cognitive interest. Curiosity or wonder, the desire to look above or below, or on the inside or the other side of the proximate aspect of things; the desire to explore one's world and touch if possible its uttermost boundaries; the desire to explain, or to see what unity and order there are in things—this is a fundamental spring of action. And the cosmic reality, whatever be its specific nature, is its supreme object. Contemplation or philosophy is then the first, as it is perhaps the most sure, of real religious values. That the cosmic reality as such is an object of aesthetic interest is probable, but less certain. By the aesthetic interest I mean the bias of the conscious faculties themselves—their impulse to prefer certain objects for their exercise. It would appear that there is a specific "fascination" in the speculative or reasoning process as this leads from appearance to reality; or in the consciousness of the gravity and import of "first and last things"; or in the sense of the complexity, majesty, and prodigious power of nature. But it is evident that the degree of its aesthetic value is

dependent upon the specific nature of the cosmos, as is not the case with its cognitive value. A revelation of the ultimate, while it would inevitably satisfy the will to know, might afford an aesthetically intolerable spectacle of discord and futility.

This dependence of cosmic value upon the specific nature of reality is even clearer in relation to the social interest. If the cosmic reality be in fact a *socius*, an "other mind," as Professor Hocking conceives it, then as "intimate, infallible associate" it satisfies man's craving for companionship as no other object can.<sup>1</sup> But if, on the other hand, the reality be a dead waste surrounding a minute oasis of life, then it defeats the same craving and is the occasion of a profound sense of loneliness and desolation.

As truth, or beauty, or unfailing companion, the cosmic reality may, then, possess immediate value, or serve as itself the object of human interest.

(2) The instrumental values of the cosmic reality appear more prominently in the history of religion, and their importance is more easily apprehended. It is implied in the very notion of cosmic reality that in the last analysis it should determine the existence of all those objects and agencies by which man succeeds and fails in his manifold undertakings. To it man owes his food, his shelter, his money, his power, his friends, his life, and from it he suffers the loss of these good things. A cosmic reality will possess positive instrumental value in so far as it gives, and negative value in so far as it withholds or takes away, these objects or conditions of success. The general notion is obvious enough. But there is a difference among instrumental values that has a profoundly important application here. Instrumental values may be beneficent or benevolent; injurious merely or malicious. In other words, the cosmic reality may be conceived as accidental or as intentional in its bearing upon human interests.<sup>2</sup> It may lend itself to human uses, or devote itself thereto from love and ministering care or from a ruling purpose to bring about and maximize human happiness.

<sup>1</sup> Hocking, *Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 224; Part IV, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> An interest *in* interest, such as a benevolent cosmic reality would be conceived to have, would correspond to my notion of a *moral* interest.



It is scarcely necessary to remark that religion almost invariably attributes to cosmic reality a motive that is judged friendly or hostile by its works. Indeed, not uncommonly God is conceived as no more than a benevolent interest in general, its apparently injurious or mixed effects being supposed to be instruments or phases of a total good that is taken on trust. The superior value of benevolence to accidental beneficence lies, of course, in the greater guaranty of its permanence and consistency.

2. *The ideal religious values.*—The ideal religious values will be those attaching to the objects which are created by the religious or cosmic imagination. The cosmic ideals possess, like the cosmic reality, a character of ultimateness and supremacy, but differ in the important respect that thinking makes them so. I mean, of course, human or finite thinking. I am still anxious to avoid raising fundamental differences of opinion. Everyone would, I suppose, admit the distinction between the soul's being really immortal and my supposing it to be immortal. The suppositional immortality is of my own making, and is an example of what I shall call an ideal religious object. Generally speaking, these ideal objects arise in response to a demand for their corresponding realities. In other words, such cosmic objects as would possess value if they were real tend to be created by the imagination; but when so created they possess a value in relation to the same interest which generated them. In other words, as we have already noted above, interests employ the imagination to provide them with an ideal fulfilment; and, where the interest is in a cosmic object, the result is an ideal religious value. In discussing values of this class, I shall again make use of the distinction between immediate and instrumental values; for theory of value is, as Oliver Wendell Holmes would say, "like splitting a log; when you have done you have two more to split."

(1) Immediate ideal value attaches to those works of the imagination that satisfy in and of themselves. For every real immediate value there will be an ideal immediate value which answers to the same interest. Thus a cosmic first principle satisfies the cognitive interest. That being the case, one will like *to conceive* of a first principle. If a cosmic "other mind" would pro-

foundly satisfy man's social instincts, then the *supposition* of such a companion will satisfy them, at least so long as the supposition lasts. But we cannot proceed further, alas! without splitting our splinters again. The cognitive and social values just cited attach only to ideal objects of a certain sort, to what may be called *beliefs*. They attach only to apparent reality, or to what is *taken to be real*. The aesthetic interest, on the other hand, will find fulfilment in the work of pure fancy or in an obsolete belief. The difference is by no means unimportant to the understanding of religious phenomena. A myth would seem to arise originally in response to the cognitive interest, and so long as it is believed it satisfies that interest by a sense of contact with original things. After the myth is recognized as fiction, it may, however, retain its beauty or picturesqueness, or perhaps for the first time acquire it, and so be transposed from the cognitive to the aesthetic interest. But the immediate values of fancy are by no means confined to the aesthetic interest proper. Any interest whatsoever may express itself, not only in beliefs, but in idle dreams, from which, though they are known to be idle, it may none the less derive a certain satisfaction.

But belief-value, again, is evidently of two sorts, according as it is or is not conditional on truth. There is an immediate value in belief that attaches to judgments or supposals *whether they be true or not*, and that attaches equally to illusion, hallucination, and make-believe. Such a value is "subjective" in the sense that it is independent of the reality of its object, provided only the unreality of its object be not known. Thus, if I believe in a Divine Companion, and can vividly represent him, I may enjoy him whether the facts would justify me or not. Where, on the other hand, the imagination follows the outlines of an independent reality, one may speak of true values.

Two general points remain to be remarked. First, it must not be supposed that immediate ideal values are necessarily good. As one's fears may breed ghosts, so cosmic *horror vacui* may generate an image of desolation, or agoraphobia, or a haunting sense of cosmic scrutiny, or malice. Second, true values imply real values: that is, a true belief implies whatever extrinsic values its object would possess if real. Thus true belief in a Heavenly Father not only

possesses whatever values it has as belief but implies whatever values would attach to a real Heavenly Father.

(2) The threefold division of ideal values that has been applied to immediate values—the division into the values of subjective belief, true belief, and conscious fiction—will serve us also in the classification of instrumental values. As a whole, these will be the values possessed by products of the imagination in so far as these cause or condition the immediate objects of interest. By the instrumental value of subjective belief is meant the liability of belief to bring about the existence of other value objects, real or ideal, whether it be true or not. Value of this sort may be described as mental hygiene. There are certain beliefs, such as the belief in the triumph of good, or the belief in the supremacy of spirit, that have a generally wholesome effect upon the human mind. They aid achievement through removing anxiety or through furnishing incentive, or, where the belief is a belief in the achievement itself, through affording confidence. These values depend on the content of the belief and are independent of its truth. Thus a man may be moved by faith to heroic and partially successful exertions in behalf of what is in fact a lost cause. On the other hand, there are certain instrumental values that attach to true belief whatever its content. Such would be the cognitive value of true ideas, of ideas which anticipate reality and lead to verification in immediate experience. A true cosmic hypothesis would possess such value superlatively. All religious symbols, in so far as they are true, possess it in a measure. And there is the more familiar value of practical guidance. A true idea is an idea to live by. The whole value of applied science is of this type. In religion a similar value attaches to a true opinion of the foundation of things, of the deeper operative causes, or of the future of the soul. Such truths may enable a man to control his fate or prepare to meet it.

Finally, fancies or fictions may have an instrumental value. Like subjective belief, they may operate as specific remedies for the soul's disorders and provide the needed sedative or stimulant. But they render a more far-reaching service in furnishing clues to action. I mean to refer to the office of the imagination in representing to the will its own ends or aims. Ideals in this sense are

not beliefs, but preliminary plans of action which serve to mark out its course and give it steadiness and continuity. The multiplication of such imaginary possibilities, furthermore, contributes to speculative and practical resourcefulness, giving belief and action a wide range of choice.

As in the case of immediate values, we must not fail to remark that instrumental values may be evil as well as good. Subjective beliefs and fancies may be depressing as well as tonic, morbid as well as wholesome. False belief is misleading and dangerous. Furthermore, in the case of instrumental ideal values we meet with the peculiar and far-reaching fact that good may itself be the cause of evil. Thus subjective values may, on account of their immediate or instrumental good, stand in the way of true values. The hopefulness of a false belief in the cosmic centrality of man may prevent his acquiring the true belief in his insignificance. Or the delights of a fanciful heaven may divert a man from his endeavor to enter into the real heaven. Or the satisfaction afforded by a belief in a beneficent Providence may prevent a man's availing himself of the real forces of nature by which he may assist himself, as when from trust in God a man forgets to keep his powder dry.

### III

This *conflict* of religious values is the central theme of every serious philosophy of religion, and makes it necessary to define some principle by which a rational choice or reconciliation may be made. But by way of furnishing further preliminary distinctions that may be useful in a philosophy of the matter, I wish to survey religious values from a slightly different angle. I wish to consider the relation of religious values to other values, to what may be called, by contrast, the "secular" values. This is equivalent to asking what a man may expect to get from his religion that he would not have without it. If this question is conceived in the broadest possible way, it brings into view three notions concerning religion that seem to me to be well worth setting down. Religion may be conceived as *auxiliary*, that is, as facilitating the secular life; or as *disciplinary*, that is, as correcting and reducing it; or as *compensatory*, that is, as substituting new goods for old evils.

(1) The values of religion are auxiliary in so far as they supply objects or instrumentalities for interests that have arisen independently. Religion doubtless presents itself first in this guise. The first lessons of experience teach one how to get what one wants. The most naïve attitude toward any new object is to look for aid from it. Things present themselves first to the child as what he wants and confidently seeks to enjoy, or as what he dislikes and can refuse or avoid; persons are friends to be used, or enemies to be escaped or retaliated upon. The first deities are patrons, tutelary spirits, ancestral, tribal, or national allies that signify man's hope of having his way in this world. He is not permitted to enjoy this hope long. Except for the spoiled children of men, it is soon shattered by experience of failure and the consequent recognition of limitation and dependence. But this first attitude, naïve as it is, most perfectly and purely expresses the motive of life. To live is to seek, with the expectation of success. The most ardent and generous hope dreams of unlimited and universal success. This is the first hope, which is not yet sobered by disillusionment and which haunts later life as a departed and lamented vision. The most extravagant and immoderate ideal is that every imaginable person should have everything that he could possibly want. Therefore experience leaves one a sadder as well as a wiser man. Therefore one looks for consolation or compensation. For one now hopes to save something, or to succeed in part, or to secure an equivalent, or at least relief from one's worst fears. In any case the promise of religion is compared with the first hope and measured in the same scale.

(2) The values of religion are "disciplinary" in so far as they fulfil a remnant of interests only at the cost of abandoning the rest. The second lesson of experience teaches one, not how to get what one wants, but what not to want, or how to do without. The child must soon learn that in order to possess at all he must give up. In religion this appears in the recognition that the god will serve his worshipers only conditionally. He will not answer every prayer, but only prayers for prescribed goods. As man learns in a secular way to be thankful for small favors, or to want but little here below, so he regards his god less as an indulgent grandmother

and more as a stern parent to whom he addresses himself with mingled fear and hope, and whom he loves not so much for the greatness of his bounty as for the smallness of the worshiper's desert. This disciplinary principle in religion may be carried to any extreme. "We are not meant to succeed," says Stevenson. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," says the Psalmist; "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." That these things should be said without bitterness is a triumph of religion. They do not signify the bounty of the universe, however; but rather the capacity of man to reduce his demands to whatever modicum the universe will yield. They specifically imply a decline of hope from its first natural buoyancy, and a recognition of the hardness of the lot of one born into such a world.

The Christian's pious resignation is, however, far exceeded by the total renunciation of the Buddhist. Suffering is here judged to be as universal as desire itself; the fruition of desire is an illusory and dangerous phantom inviting man to prolong his misery. There is nothing better than relief from suffering through "the cessation of desire." Here religion is unmistakably a best *possible*, or a minimum evil, rather than a best imaginable; a saving of the most precious possession when it is impossible to save all, or a bare escape in the presence of general misfortune. In short, the disciplinary value of religion implies a diminution of total value; a religion which promises only such value must, even though it bring acquiescence and peace, be admitted to offer less than a religion that promises man the positive fulfilment of his original stock of interests.

(3) The values of religion are "compensatory" in so far as they may be substituted for secular failure or loss. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Such is religion's offer of consolation. It offers assured hope with which to replace the vain hopes of this world; or success in another field for failure in the field of secular endeavor. Here it is important to recognize that the need of consolation implies actual evil and loss; and that greatness of the need is proportional to the greatness of the extremity. The consolation of religion may

even be like the opiate which is administered only when the pain is insufferable or recovery impossible; or like the pathetic comfort of parents who, having lost their first-born, take refuge in one another. Misery loves company and may be mitigated thereby. But then the good company is measured by the evil of the misery which it offsets. And the net good may be less than zero.

Where religion promises new values that shall be additional, or that shall surpass the evil which they cure, they are still at any rate measured by the standard of present interests. This idea underlies Höfding's notion of the "conservation of value." Religion in this sense promises better things to replace what is lost. It unfolds new possibilities, or enriches life by the creation of new interests. Although first invoked as a necessity, accepted as a hard lesson, or resorted to as a second best, religion may turn out to be a greater opportunity. But even in this case the original impulses constitute the nucleus to which the new must be added, if it be indeed an increment, or a measure which must be exceeded if the new end be in truth a "greater" good.

#### IV

The value of this threefold distinction lies in the light which it may throw upon the comparative degrees of value in religions. It emphasizes a fact of prime importance, the fact, namely, that no religion save the most childish proposes to fulfil the hope of first intent. All religions that reflect any prolonged experience of life recognize the inevitableness of partial failure and the need of a reconstruction of life that shall reduce hope and adapt it to more or less hard and exacting conditions. Hope springs from existing interests, from love of life or of friends, from concrete preferences and ambitions. Religious hope, in so far as it is naïve and follows its first promptings, looks to cosmic realities for a guaranty of long life or of immortal life, or of the prolongation of social relations, or of success, or of happiness. The fullest and freest hope, the dream of unlimited good, imputes to the cosmic reality the realization and preservation of all values, together with the possibility of adding more. And this dream remains a best possible by which more sober and modest hopes are judged. The disciplinary factor in

religion reflects the fact on which all morality is founded—the fact, namely, that life will bear no fruit unless it is pruned. The shoots of instinct and desire are cut back in order that a few, or at least one, may flower. This course is not dictated by hope pure and unbounded, but by hope qualified by a recognition of hard circumstance. The motive is the same outward pressure of impulse, but effort is concentrated in directions in which circumstance permits advance. The course implies a recognition of tragedy, though that tragedy may be forgotten through a schooling of the mind, or through gratitude that the loss is not greater. And the need and acceptance of consolation reflects a still further reduction of first hope. Consolation or compensation comes after a recognition of loss or of the impossibility of attaining a prior aim. And the measure of consolation must be its equivalence to, or its balance over, that first love.

In short, life here presents itself in successive phases: first, the effort to get whatever one wants; second, the effort to get some of what one wants by sacrificing the rest; third, the acceptance of something else in place of what one first wanted. Religion may promise one what one wants; or, teaching how to reduce one's wants, promise the remnant; or offer one new values in exchange for what one wants. In the last case it may be claimed that the new or peculiarly religious values that replace secular values so far exceed them as to make their loss negligible. It may even be claimed that the loss of the secular values is better than their gain or preservation, on the ground that such a loss stimulates or occasions new interests which would not have been possible otherwise, and which are more profitable than those from whose defeat they spring. But if such a claim is to be proved, it is evident that the new values must be shown to be commensurable with the old; which is to acknowledge that the old are in truth values, and their loss a genuine loss. In other words, unless there is real loss there is no gain; if that which is subtracted is not value, then neither is that which is added. So that this most sanguine religion is still built upon the acceptance of tragedy; it hopes for a good that is less than one can imagine, even though it be more than one had once feared was the most to be expected.



These are distinctions which I think might prove useful in an attempt to estimate the promise expressly offered by any religion or implied in any philosophy.<sup>1</sup> I have not attempted more than a rough draught of them. But I do not see how the philosophy of religion can become more exact without moving in this direction. The subject is more complex perhaps than any which philosophy is called upon to discuss. And I should regard it as worth while had I merely emphasized this complexity, and called attention to the necessity of a more elaborate and refined analysis than is customary. But I feel confident also that such analysis should in part at least follow the outlines here indicated. It is necessary to distinguish values attaching to the beings which are the objects of religious experience, from the values attaching to these experiences themselves—to the creatures of imagination and belief. In this second or “ideal” class of values it is especially important to distinguish those which are and those which are not conditioned by truth; to note the possibility of conflict between these subclasses and to judge their comparative weight. And it is necessary to define the categories or standards by which increase, diminution, substitution, equivalence, and reconstruction of values are to be defined and estimated. But perhaps in the present essay I shall have done no more than illustrate my conviction that, in view of the widespread underestimation of its complexity, religion is a subject that cannot be made clearer until it has first been made more obscure.

<sup>1</sup> In another essay I have attempted to apply these distinctions to “Contemporary Philosophies of Religion”—cf. *Harvard Theological Review*, July, 1914.